

III. *An Extract of a Second Letter from Dr. Oliver, Communicated by Walter Moyle, Esq;*

Spithead, the 9th. of October, 1693.

S I R,

I Went once more to the Well to make my Observations, when we lay last in *Torbay*, and having a little more time than I had before, tho' little enough for so odd a *Phænomenon*, I shall answer those Questions you were pleased to send me as well as I am able.

*Quest. Whether the Flux and Reflux be constant, at all times of the Day and Year, or only after Rain? And what Account the Country People give of it?*

*Answ.* By every Body I met with, I am informed 'tis most constant Winter and Summer, tho' I am apt to think, it moves faster in Winter, when the Well is fuller, than in Summer, because when I observed it first, I think it flow'd somewhat quicker, than I found it did on my second Observation, which was above six Weeks later in the Year, being towards the end of *August*; for the Water was then considerably shrunk in the Well, notwithstanding we had for about a Fortnight much Rain: And tho' when once it began to flow, it perform'd its flux and reflux in little more than a Minutes time, yet I observed it would stand at its lowest Ebb sometimes two or three Minutes, so that it ebb'd and flow'd by my Watch about sixteen times in an hour, and sometimes, I have been told, twenty. As soon as the Water in the Well began to rise, I saw a great many bubbles ascend from the bottom, but when the Water began to fall, the bubbling immediately ceased. I measured its high and low-water marks again, and found them as before, between five and six Inches distant; not of Perpendicular depth,

depth, but as it spread itself on a broad Stone, as the Sea does on a Beach or Shoar; tho' I am apt to think, its Perpendicular height would be as much or more in that time, were its out-let damm'd up to try an Experiment, for as it rises it runs out with a small stream, which is greater or less, according as the Water in the Well rises and falls, which soon after joyning some other little Rills thereabouts, that come out of these Hills, they empty themselves into the Sea at *Brixam*.

*Quest. 2. Whether it has any Communication with the Sea, or any Hills above it ?*

*Ans.* That it has any Communication with the Sea, is not manifest, nor is the Water brackish at all. The whole Country adjacent is very Hilly all along the Coast, infomuch that from *Brixam* to the top of the Hill is about a Mile and half, the Well is about half way up the Hill, which hereabout is somewhat uneven and interrupted, and comes out at a small descent, yet considerably higher than the surface of the Sea.

*Quest 3. Whether it be a Mineral Water ?*

*Ans.* I cannot apprehend 'tis impregnated with any manner of Mineral: I tryed it with an Oaken Leaf as soon as I saw it the first time, but could not find it change colour. I drank of it, 'tis very soft and pleasant, has no manner of roughness in it, and serves for all manner of uses to the Country People in their Houses. I could not make any farther Experiments for want of Time and Opportunity.

Give me leave before I finish this, to tell you of one of my Adventures at Sea this Summer, 'tis Philosophical too.

The 12th. of *August* last I was sent for on Board the *Suffolk*, to visit some that were sick, the Weather proving foul, was obliged to lye there that Night: In the Morning about Three a Clock it began to Thunder and Lighten, and Rain, which continued for near an hour

moderate enough ; but about Four a Clock came a Clap of Thunder and Lightning all at the same moment of time, that was so smart and violent, that I thought the Ship had been split in pieces, and jump'd out of Bed, put on Stockings and Shoes, to see what the matter was, I no sooner got out of my Cabin, but an Alarm went through the Ship, of *Fire! Fire!* the dreadfullest word that can happen on Board, and put us all into Confusion. The Sick, and all that were in Hammocks, came up on the Deck in their shirts, and made a grievous Noise ; Thunder and Lightning going before, made it look like a Resurrection : It happened to Rain briskly about that time, and so with the help of our Buckets, the Fire, which was occasioned by the Balls of Lightning that came between Decks, was soon put out ; this happened in the Bay of *Biscay*, in 47 and 48. *gr. lat.* I lay at that time forward near the Mast, in one of the Officers Cabins ; over my head in the Gang-way was one Man knockt down, and lay some time before he recovered himself : A second near him was blown almost the length of the Quarter-deck, a third was burnt all down his Back with the Lightning in his Hammock. Our Main Top-Gallant Mast was split in pieces, our Top-Mast not touch'd ; our Main-Mast split from the top down to the very Deck. I made what hast aboard the *Elizabeth* I could, and that very Morning our Lieutenant in this Storm jumped over Board, as you have heard.